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SELF-ASSESSMENT: 
A Journey of Change

66TH CONFERENCE ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Basic Beliefs:

- The work that we do is meaningful
- Our job is to assist students, families and educators in areas that reflect our training
- Our evaluations should result in information that can be applied in assisting students, families and educators

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Professional Learning Objectives:

- Review obligation to meet evaluation and eligibility requirements, based on:
 - federal and state regulations,
 - professional standards
- Discuss and practice effective strategies in data collection and organization for reporting of evaluation results
- Apply a structured framework in the synthesis of relevant data for eligibility decision-making that:
 - meets federal and state and regulations
 - aligns with professional standards

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IDEA Eligibility

- Formal evaluations within the public school arena are conducted when a child is suspected to have a disability under IDEA
- The results of the evaluation are used to determine:
 - eligible in 1(or more) of 14 areas of eligibility
 - + adverse effect on educational performance
 - + need for specially designed instruction
 - = disability under IDEA

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IDEA Eligibility

All IEP team decisions are data-based; reliant on documented information that has been carefully considered...

After the IEP team answers questions related to:

- disability criteria
- adverse effect
- need for specially designed instruction

The team must also respond to the following (discussed prior to evaluation):

- ✓ The determination is NOT a result of lack of instruction in reading
- ✓ The determination is NOT a result of lack of instruction in math
- ✓ The determination is NOT the result of being a student who has Limited English Proficiency

☞ If all answers are YES, then eligibility for special education services has been determined.

☞ If any of the answers are NO, then eligibility for special education services is not determined

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Educationally Relevant Evaluation

Provides the IEP team with information from each evaluator's professional lens

Informs decisions about:

- Present Level of Academic and Functional Performance
- Access to Common Core & Essential Standards
- Goals
- Services
- Accommodations and modifications
- Least Restrictive Environment

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IDEA Regulations

§ 300.304 Evaluation procedures

(b) *Conduct of evaluation.* In conducting the evaluation, the public agency **must**—

(1) Use a **variety of assessment tools** and strategies to gather **relevant functional, developmental, and academic information** about the child, including information provided by the parent...

(2) **Not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion** for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child; and

(3) Use **technically sound instruments** that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors.

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IDEA Regulations

§ 300.306 Determination of eligibility

(c) *Procedures for determining eligibility and educational need.*

(1) In interpreting evaluation data for the purpose of determining if a child is a child with a disability under § 300.8, and the educational needs of the child, each public agency **must**—

(i) **Draw upon** information from **a variety of sources**, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, and teacher recommendations, as well as information about the child's physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior; and

(ii) **Ensure that information** obtained from **all of these sources** is **documented and carefully considered**.

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NC Policies

NC 1500-2.11 Evaluation

...A full and individualized evaluation of a child's needs must be conducted before any action... *Eligibility of children must be determined by using multiple sources of data and must not be dependent upon single test scores.* Evaluation procedures may include, but are not limited to, observations, interviews, progress monitoring data... or other techniques and procedures as deemed appropriate by the professional(s) conducting the evaluations. *When eligibility for specific learning disability is being determined, evaluation data must include progress monitoring data.*

Note: The determination of needed screenings and evaluations is based upon the unique needs of the student and not solely on the requirements for the suspected disability category.

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Principles for Professional Ethics (NASP)

IV.C. Assessment and Interventions:

- Maintain high standards
 - Careful consideration to individual integrity and individual differences
 - Select appropriate assessments; decision-making related to assessment is primarily data-based
- Knowledgeable of validity and reliability of their instruments
- Use multiple assessment methods to arrive at conclusions

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Principles for Professional Ethics (NASP)

IV.C. Assessment and Interventions:

- Use assessment methods that are considered responsible, research-based practice
- Does not condone the misuse of the information provided
- Intervention planning is based on presenting problems
- Use assessment and intervention that assists in promoting mental health in the children served

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NC Professional Standards (School Psychology)

Standard 1: Demonstrate Leadership

- Demonstrate expertise in collecting, managing, and interpreting various types of individual and group data
- Share individual, classroom, building, and system data with administrators to promote school improvement and improved student outcomes



NC Professional Standards (School Psychology)

Standard 2: Promote A Respectful Environment For Diverse Populations

- Consider relevant individual differences (e.g. developmental level, cultural background, and area of disability) when selecting assessment procedures and when recommending educational services or interventions
- Understand how a student's culture and background may influence school performance



NC Professional Standards (School Psychology)

Standard 3: Use Knowledge to Improve Student Achievement

- Utilize assessment, consultation, counseling, and collaboration skills to create and provide developmentally appropriate and targeted interventions to meet identified needs
- Incorporate information about students' ethnic, racial, language, cultural, or socioeconomic backgrounds when providing consultations, conducting evaluations



NC Professional Standards (School Psychology)

Standard 4: Support Learning Through the Use of a Systematic Problem-Solving Approach

- Use a strength-based approach when selecting assessment instruments to identify learning and behavior problems
- Knowledgeable about and skillful in the use of various evaluative techniques

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NC Professional Standards (School Psychology)

Standard 4: Support Learning Through the Use of a Systematic Problem-Solving Approach

- Use a broad array of assessment procedures within a problem-solving model consistent with prevailing standards
- Write effective and practical assessment reports of student evaluations that adequately address the referral question(s) and provide useful recommendations for teachers

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NC Professional Standards (School Psychology)

Standard 5: Reflect on Practice

- Collect and analyze student data to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery
- Use findings from scientifically-based intervention research when designing education, mental health, or treatment programs for children

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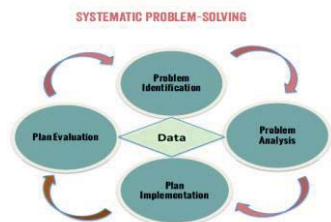
Evaluation - Not Just About Eligibility

"The full intent of special education is to devise a program of instruction that will **accelerate the student's progress** beyond that which was realized during the provision of multi-tier supports."

The RTI Approach to Evaluating Learning Disabilities
Kovaleski, VanDerHeyden & Shapiro



Evaluation is a *continuation* of the problem solving process not the goal of it.



Educationally Relevant Evaluation

Provides IEP team with information from each evaluator's professional lens

Informs decisions about:

- Present Level of Academic and Functional Performance
- Access to Common Core & Essential Standards
- Goals
- Services
- Accommodations and modifications
- Least Restrictive Environment



Educationally Relevant Evaluation

Guiding Questions:

- What does this student need to access, participate and make progress in the general education curriculum?
- What supports this student's performance?
- What limits this student's performance?



An evaluation *begins* with the review of *existing* data

"A school that has robust procedures for implementing MTSS will have collected during the provision of these supports a wide range of assessment data that *not only has informed instruction and intervention*, but can also be *used as important evidence* for special education eligibility decisions."

The RTI Approach to Evaluating Learning Disabilities
Kovaleski, VanDerHeyden & Shapiro



Begin at the beginning: Referral for Consideration of Special Education Services

Review of educational strengths (academic and functional)

- This will serve as the foundation for further development of skills, whether:
 - The child is referred (or not)
 - The child is identified as eligible (or not)



Begin at the beginning:
**Referral for Consideration of
 Special Education Services**

Documentation of targeted needs

- Academic
- Functional
- Behavioral

Begin at the beginning:
**Referral for Consideration of
 Special Education Services**

Data Review

- State assessment data (if available)
- Local assessment data
- Past/current grades

Begin at the beginning:
**Referral for Consideration of
 Special Education Services**

Parent Input

- Formal evaluation results provided by parent
- Information provided by parent specific to current academic and/or functional educational performance

Begin at the beginning:

Referral for Consideration of Special Education Services

Observation Data

- Systematic observational data collected
- Observational information provided by teachers, administrators and other relevant school staff (specific to the student's current academic and/or functional performance)

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Begin at the beginning:

Referral for Consideration of Special Education Services

Targeted Interventions

- Documentation of interventions implemented (specific to the area(s) of need)
- Frequency, intensity and duration of interventions
- Results
 - Numerical
 - Graphically displayed (if available)

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Yes, this is at the beginning:

Referral for Consideration of Special Education Services

Considerations:

- Limited English Proficiency
 - If yes, to what extent are the effects a contributing factor in current areas of need?
- Factors reviewed and considered specific to adequate instruction in reading/math
- Additional information reviewed from other sources (discipline, medical information, etc.)

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Referral for Consideration of Special Education Services

Summarize/Decide:

- Based on the information reviewed, what has the team learned?
- What is the team going to do about what they learned?
 - If decision is “conduct evaluation” – what additional data is needed to inform instructional decisions for this student? (Educationally Relevant Evaluation)

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Reflect on your practice

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Reflect on Practice Survey Results

- Are you part of the problem-solving team that initiates referrals for struggling students?
- Are you part of the IEP team involved with reevaluation determinations?
- Are you part of the decision-making team regarding initial referrals?

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Objective – Gather Relevant Information

- **Relevant -**

- The information we gather must be helpful in identifying unique needs and assisting those that work with the child

Will the information assist the IEP team in:

→ Educating this student?

→ Writing goals?

→ Creating individualized accommodations?

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Types of Educational Performance

- **Academic:**

- Performance in school content areas assessed, based on standards set out by local government and the school itself

- **Functional:**

- Routines/activities of everyday living (extends beyond academic achievement)
- Application of skills

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Utilizing RIOT within an Evaluation

- RIOT involves:

- Record review
- Interviews
- Observation
- Testing

- Typically an integral part of the early intervening period.

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Utilizing RIOT within an Evaluation

- Data sources and evaluation tools in each of these four areas should be included in a full and individual evaluation.
- The collection of this information and data may occur during the problem solving process and/or after the special education evaluation period begins.



RIOT Data Sources

Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ student work samples ✓ Grades ✓ office referrals ✓ other discipline data 	Interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ teachers ✓ parents ✓ counselors ✓ the student ✓ others involved in the student's education
Observe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ learning environment ✓ student in specific, relevant settings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Informal observation ✓ Systematic observation 	Test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ universal screening ✓ curriculum-based measures (CBM) ✓ classroom tests ✓ districtwide and state tests ✓ functional behavior assessments ✓ standardized assessments



Reflect on Practice Survey Results

In the evaluation of students, what is your level of involvement in:

- Collecting observation information?
- Collecting social/developmental information?
- Interviewing parents?
- Interviewing teachers?



Autism Spectrum Disorder

Example evaluation plan organized by RIOT:

Review:

Interview:

Observe:

Test:



Intellectual Disability

Example evaluation plan organized by RIOT:

Review:

Interview:

Observe:

Test:



Other Health Impaired

Example evaluation plan organized by RIOT:

Review:

Interview:

Observe:

Test:



Specific Learning Disability

Example evaluation plan organized by RIOT:

Review:

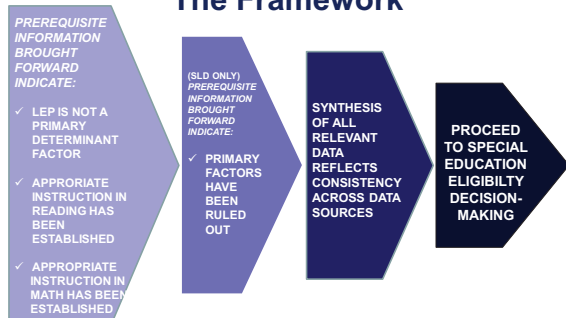
Interview:

Observe:

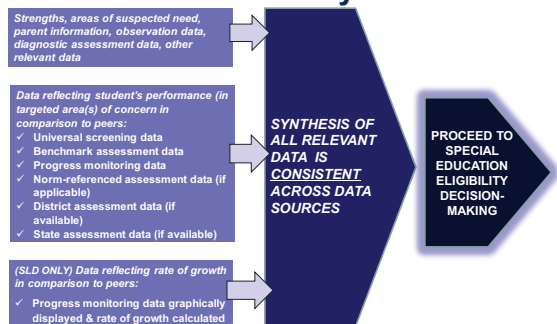
Test:



The Framework



Relevant Data to Synthesize



Communication Responsibilities

- Written
- Oral

Let's start with written...

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Educationally Relevant Report Writing

Common complaints:

- Emphasis on test-by-test interpretation rather than focus on the individual child
- Over reliance on technical jargon
- Focus on child's weaknesses
- Generic interpretation
- Higher reading level (college level) above the average educational level of the typical parent (grade 12 or less)

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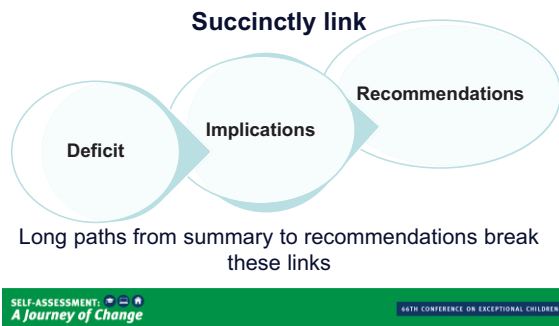
NASP & APA Ethical Guidelines

- Present findings in language **clearly understood** by the recipients
- Written reports should **emphasize interpretation and recommendations**
- Written reports should **support the recipients in their work or interactions with the child**
- Interpretation of test data should be **written in simple language**
- Interpretation of data should be based on **convergent and comprehensive** assessment sources

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Evaluation Results/Interpretation



Evaluation Recommendations

- **Clear, feasible, individualized**
 - Clearly explained
 - Reflect an understanding of the classroom and the curriculum
 - Student specific
 - Tied to identified needs



Communication Responsibilities

- Written
- Oral

Let's talk about oral...

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

—George Bernard Shaw



Reflect on Practice Survey Results

In communicating evaluation results to IEP teams (including parents), what is your level of involvement in:

- Interpretative meetings for initial referrals?
- Interpretative meetings for reevaluations?
- Individual meetings with parents regarding results prior to the IEP team meeting? (In person/via phone)
- Development of IEPs? (if eligible)
- Development of general ed. intervention adjustments? (if not eligible)

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Communication rules to live by:

"The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak."

—Hans Hofmann

"If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it enough."

—Albert Einstein

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Coming soon to an LEA near you:

Enhancement of the processes attached to our work:

- Revised documentation processes
 - IEP forms
- Additional guidance on NC policy
 - Specific to evaluation of students
- Guidance on evaluation report writing
 - Universal criteria
 - MTSS framework applied

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How are we using our evaluation data?

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Advocacy Through Disability Data

IDEA DATA:				
Child Count data (April 2016):	% of total ADM:	Autism Spectrum Disorder:	Other Health Impaired:	Serious/Emotional Disability:
3-21 (All IDEA) = 202,633	~13%	18,813 (9% of IDEA total)	35,964 (17.7% of IDEA total)	5,520 (2.7% of IDEA total)
EVALUATION DATA (2014-2015):				
Total Evaluations Conducted:	IDEA Eligible (within 90 day timeline):	Autism Spectrum Disorder:	Other Health Impaired:	Serious/Emotional Disability:
58,608	40,472	9% of initial identified = 3,642	17.7% of initial identified = 7,163	2.7% of initial identified = 1,093

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Disability Data: State Trends

April 2016 Child Count:

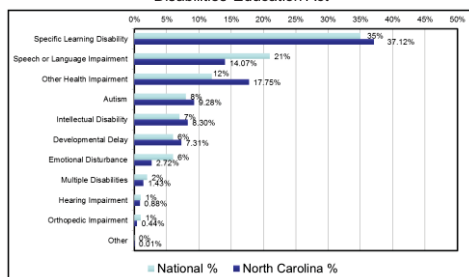
- Total special education identified = 202,633 (3-21)
(Increase of 1,660 students from 200,973 in April 2015)
- School age (6-21) - 12.1% of school-age identified
- 5 most prevalent classifications (3-21):
 - 1) SLD = 37.1% of total
 - 2) OHI = 17.8%
 - 3) SI = 14.1%
 - 4) AU = 9.2%
 - 5) ID = 8.2% (Mild=5.7%, Moderate=2.2%, Severe=0.3%)
(A close 6th is DD @ 7.3%)

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Disability Data: National¹ and State² Comparisons

Percentage distribution of children ages 3-21 served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act



Sources:
¹U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

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Disability Data – Guiding Questions:

- What does your district level disability data tell you?
 - Are overall district percentages above or below state and national trends?
 - Are percentages by disability category above or below state and national trends?
- What does your building level data tell you?
 - Are overall building percentages above or below district, state or national trends?
 - At the building level, are percentages by disability category above or below district, state, or national trends?

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Reflect on Practice Survey Results

In decision-making around students with disabilities, what is your level of involvement in:

- Analysis of district level data on total identified?
- Analysis of district level data by disability type?
- Analysis of building level data on total identified?
- Analysis of building level data by disability type?
- Using data to inform evaluation practices?
- Using data to inform identification practices?

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Resources:

- National Association of School Psychologists. (2010). [Principles for Professional Ethics](#)
- [North Carolina Professional School Psychology Standards](#)
- Public Schools of North Carolina Exceptional Children Division. (2014). [NC Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities, Amended July 2014](#)
- Public Schools of North Carolina Exceptional Children Division. (2016). [Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities Addendum](#)
- Federal Register. (2006). [Part II 34 CFR Parts 300 and 301 Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities and Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities Final Rule](#). Department of Education.



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